

Current Economic Programs Printed Survey Results: by the ZIP Code Business Patterns Statistics Users Respondent Base

U.S. Census Bureau
Current Economic Statistics User Survey

OMB CQM-26 (Rev.5/5/98)

I. DATA CONTENT

Your answers identifying the survey data you use will help us understand our users' patterns of data use.

1. Which Current Economic Statistics from the Census Bureau do you use? (Mark all that apply.)

(1) Monthly

0.7%;	1	None
60.8%;	93	Retail Sales
39.2%;	60	Wholesale Trade
45.1%;	69	Manufacturing/Trade Inventory/Sales
58.8%;	90	Housing Starts
73.9%;	113	Building Permits
49.7%;	76	New Home Sales
44.4%;	68	Value of New Construction Put in Place
34.0%;	52	Housing Completions
28.8%;	44	Expenditures for Residential Improvements
41.8%;	64	New Residential Construction
19.0%;	29	New Mobile Home Placements
37.3%;	57	Monthly Imports and Exports
37.3%;	57	Current Industrial Reports
36.6%;	56	Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, Orders

Replies 153; Forms 171

(2) Quarterly

47.8%;	33	Quarterly Financial Report
79.7%;	55	Current Industrial Reports
11.6%;	8	Federal Assistance Awards Data System
30.4%;	21	Quarterly Tax Survey
11.6%;	8	Quarterly Public Employee Retirement

Replies 69; Forms 171

(3) Annual

63.2%;	108	Annual Retail Trade
49.1%;	84	Annual (Wholesale) Trade
27.5%;	47	Annual Survey of Communications
34.5%;	59	Transportation Annual Survey
32.7%;	56	Service Annual Survey
91.2%;	156	County Business Patterns

100.0%;	171	ZIP Code Business Patterns
51.5%;	88	Statistics of U.S. Businesses
35.7%;	61	Characteristics of New Housing
63.2%;	108	Annual Building Permits
34.5%;	59	New Residential Construction in Selected Metropolitan Areas
23.4%;	40	Annual Capital Expenditures
60.2%;	103	Annual Survey of Manufactures
40.9%;	70	Current Industrial Reports
21.1%;	36	Research and Development Survey
26.3%;	45	Plant Capacity Utilization
15.8%;	27	Education Finance Survey
22.2%;	38	State Tax Collection Survey
7.0%;	12	Annual Public Employee Retirement
15.8%;	27	Annual Survey of Public Employment
19.9%;	34	Consolidated Federal Funds Report
32.7%;	56	State Government Finances
43.3%;	74	Annual Imports and Exports

Replies 171; Forms 171

II. DATA DELIVERY

The Census Bureau is considering use of the Internet as the primary method of data delivery. By completing the following questions, you will help us retain the most essential delivery formats and design the best possible data delivery service.

(4) 2. How do you receive current economic data now? (Mark all that apply.)

87.0%;	147	Printed Publications	14.8%;	25	Direct (E-mail) delivery
74.0%;	125	World Wide Web (Internet)	10.1%;	17	FAX
66.3%;	112	CD-ROMs	1.8%;	3	Regular mail
29.6%;	50	Diskettes	3.0%;	5	Other

Replies 169; Forms 171

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- Magnetic Tape
 - Would prefer receiving printed schedules to let me know what data is available via internet.
 - Intermediate Data Vendor.3,4,6,
 - CD Rom & Publications in Library
 - building permits printout
-

(5) 3. What format do you PREFER when downloading data for further manipulation? (Mark all that apply.)

71.4%;	115	Spreadsheet (e.g., wkl, xls, etc...)
49.1%;	79	Database (e.g., dbf, mdb, etc...)
34.2%;	55	ASCII delimited
19.9%;	32	ASCII flat files
11.2%;	18	Retrieve from print or screen and enter manually
7.5%;	12	Do not manipulate data
3.7%;	6	Other

Replies 161; Forms 171

-
- Sas data sets
 - Change to landscape small font 9
 - to be determined
-

- Acrobat
- So we can manipulate.
- Also as text or word file

4. What capabilities do you want on the Census Internet site? (For each line, indicate the degree of your preferences, from 5 [high] to 1 [low].)

(6) a. Direct (E-mail) delivery:

45.0%;	68	5	16.6%;	25	3	10.6%;	16	1
17.2%;	26	4	6.0%;	9	2	4.6%;	7	Don't know

Replies 151; Forms 171

(7) b. E-mail notification:

42.5%;	62	5	21.2%;	31	3	8.9%;	13	1
14.4%;	21	4	8.9%;	13	2	4.1%;	6	Don't know

Replies 146; Forms 171

(8) c. Retrieve/display to screen:

51.0%;	77	5	12.6%;	19	3	9.3%;	14	1
21.9%;	33	4	3.3%;	5	2	2.0%;	3	Don't know

Replies 151; Forms 171

(9) d. Search:

69.0%;	107	5	11.0%;	17	3	0.6%;	1	1
17.4%;	27	4	1.3%;	2	2	0.6%;	1	Don't know

Replies 155; Forms 171

(10) e. Download complete data sets:

72.7%;	112	5	7.1%;	11	3	1.3%;	2	1
13.6%;	21	4	3.2%;	5	2	1.9%;	3	Don't know

Replies 154; Forms 171

(11) f. Download selected data:

73.8%;	118	5	5.6%;	9	3	1.2%;	2	1
16.2%;	26	4	1.2%;	2	2	1.9%;	3	Don't know

Replies 160; Forms 171

(12) g. Software help/tutorials:

25.7%;	37	5	28.5%;	41	3	9.7%;	14	1
20.8%;	30	4	12.5%;	18	2	2.8%;	4	Don't know

Replies 144; Forms 171

(13) h. Publication-quality printing:

27.4%;	40	5	19.2%;	28	3	11.6%;	17	1
25.3%;	37	4	14.4%;	21	2	2.1%;	3	Don't know

Replies 146; Forms 171

(14) i. Charts and graphs:

28.0%;	42	5	30.7%;	46	3	9.3%;	14	1
18.7%;	28	4	11.3%;	17	2	2.0%;	3	Don't know

Replies 150; Forms 171

(15) j. Geographic maps:

41.1%;	62	5	22.5%;	34	3	7.9%;	12	1
21.2%;	32	4	5.3%;	8	2	2.0%;	3	Don't know

Replies 151; Forms 171

(16) k. Other, please specify:

83.3%;	10	electronic bulletin board	16.7%;	2	Other
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Replies 12; Forms 171

- Structure and specialists available to help researchers find data.
 - ACROBAT FILES, which you may include in item h.
-

(17) l. Electronic Bulletin Board (To collect write-ins)

0.0%;	0	5	0.0%;	0	3	0.0%;	0	1
50.0%;	1	4	50.0%;	1	2	0.0%;	0	Don't know

Replies 2; Forms 171

III. DATA USAGE

Your answers describing how you use the data will help us design the most effective Current Economic Statistics retrieval tool.

(18) 5. Do you combine/compare/merge data from more than one source listed in Question 1?

23.0%;	37	No	77.0%;	124	Yes
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Replies 161; Forms 171

(19) 6. What time periods do you consider when using these data? (Mark X all that apply.)

70.7%;	118	5+ years	44.9%;	75	trends up to 1 year
69.5%;	116	trends up to 5 years	0.0%;	0	Other
54.5%;	91	latest 1 or 2 periods			

Replies 167; Forms 171

(20) 7. How do you use the data? (Mark all that apply.)

53.9%;	90	Create value-added products/services
53.3%;	89	Perform patron/client inquiries
27.5%;	46	Republish in newspaper/journal
22.2%;	37	Inform marketing decisions
19.2%;	32	Store reports/printouts for archival purposes
15.0%;	25	Inform investment decisions
14.4%;	24	Locate new sites
0.6%;	1	Other

Replies 167; Forms 171

- [none]
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(21) 8. What explanatory information do you consult when using these data? (Mark all that apply.)

86.3%;	139	Definition of terms
66.5%;	107	Narrative text describing survey results
60.2%;	97	Sampling and estimation methodology
46.6%;	75	Survey design
3.1%;	5	None
3.7%;	6	Other

Replies 161; Forms 171

- Data Dictionary
 - short trend summary is extremely helpful-where possible.
 - research
 - Census Bureau Staff
 - Source of data
 - Phone calls to Census and or DOL
-

(22) 9. Do you have any pressing data or information needs that are not currently being met?

- Regional retail sales estimates (cancelled after 1996)
- More local info. (PMSA at least)
- Non-residential building permit data.
- Updated income at MCD level; Census be used to publish Per Capita income annually.
- Finding historic data sets requires going to the library - It would be very helpful if 1980 census data was on the internet as well.
- Monthly commercial building permit statistics for Putnam Co. New York.
- More information by county.
- Need updated 1990 Census Data.
- Information on nonresidential construction.
- Printing in ASCII, converted to 6.1. That gives complete graph - 15 columns.
- Data on residential construction; alterations, renovations and conversions; and county level mobile home shipments.
- No.
- No.
- local wage by occupation & industry data
- MCD Business Patterns, Massachusetts is doing away with county government, MCD income estimates.
- The availability of Residential and Commercial Building Permit Data.
- I'd love to see employment data by SIC based on place of residence. Also wish for reconciliation between RIMS, SIC, & NAICS.
- No.

- Commercial building permits.
- Non-residential building permits data had value of new non-residential construction part in place.
- Monthly trade data based on export location.
- Yes: Durable goods forecast for up to 12 months. I can't find this info anywhere.
- MSA-level data and economic projections. New projections of pollution control expenditures (PACE study)
- Yes--Commercial building permits--Bring them back now!!!
- MSA level business patterns. Estimates (updated info) on a wider range of demographic variable for counties and sub-counties.
- Commercial Building Permits for MSA's. This program was discontinued by the Census a couple of years ago.
- Current input-output reports; 5 yrs. is too old!
- Monthly Retail Sales - Nassau-Suffolk, NY MSA (Data Discontinued?)
- Commodity flows data with 3 digit SIC value of shipments between states-The state to state flows.
- Wish you were more current...
- Seasonal Population - estimates. More information on affordable housing-market.
- Monthly Retail Sales for U.S. Metropolitan Areas.
- Downloadable ASM files in xls format would be great.
- Household Expenditure Data at State Level.
- None that I can think of at the moment
- We want SIC data at the product level by region. Please make every effort to provide locational tags to Canadian & Mexican data. Full country data profiles are not sufficient.
- Commercial & industrial building permit activity!
- Business starts by SIC at the County level.
- Two pieces of information that the Census Department had done in the past--metropolitan estimates of retail trade and metro commercial construction permit activity--both annual.
- Relatively current statistics at the county and sub-county geographic levels.
- Non-residential construction that was deleted from current const. series.
- Want monthly retail trade by state & MSA back.
- Housing stats and completions by state, MSA Value of construction put-in-place by stats, MSA
- More extensive time series!
- Place and regional economic data sets in relation to population/race trends.
- Geographic data by product class, especially in county business patterns. Totals at the 4-digit industry level aren't detailed enough.
- Utilization of data for merging with Atlas GIS. Convert landview to include information down to Block level.
- We always require information broken out by minority group status, even if they are forecast.
- Average expenditures per residential improvement project for single family homes by region. Average value for residential permits by region.
- Housing Starts by State; Retail Sales by State
- Non-residential permits!!
- Crime--not all areas of the U.S. participate in their state uniform crime reports program, so it becomes difficult to make informed decisions.
- Current local (county) data on any of the following: retail sales.
- In general, estimates and figures at higher geographic levels, such as block groups or zip + 4's.
- MSA retail sales
- Under question #1, would probably use more of the data but do not receive it.
- Population Projections
- Commercial, Industrial, and other non-residential construction put-in-place!
- Non-residential construction data outside California! Bring it back!
- Data at the metropolitan area level, e.g. retail sales, commercial building permits (office, industrial, retail).
- We have a need for long historical time series and for long-term forecasts.
- Bring back retail sales at metropolitan area level.
- sub-national retail trade
- Commercial Building Permits County level on a timely basis.
- I very much regret the termination of the state and metro area monthly census of retail trade several

- years ago.
- Just wish more data were available at county or metro level in a timely fashion
- Future of employment w/regards to manufacturing & agriculture. (i.e. what percentage of economy will these represent.) Also, resource availability trends.

IV. INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

We will soon begin restructuring the Current Economic Surveys based on the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Your answers will help us ensure that these surveys continue to provide the economic information needed by markets, policy makers, and business people. For more information on NAICS, see the Bureau's web site: <http://www.census.gov/NAICS>.

(24) 10. At what levels of detail do you MOST FREQUENTLY USE industry data classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)? (Mark all that apply.)

68.7%;	112	4-digit industries (or maximum detail I can get)
50.9%;	83	2-digit major groups
50.3%;	82	Sector totals (SIC division); e.g., Manufacturing or Retail Trade
42.9%;	70	3-digit industry groups
3.1%;	5	NA (don't use SIC-based data)
3.1%;	5	Other

Replies 163; Forms 171

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- NAICS, Duns' Product Codes
 - Greater detail when available
 - NAICS will make sector totals useful.
 - Whatever is available below 4-digits
 - D & B's 2+2 system 8 digits
-

(25) 11. Were you aware that the SIC system is being replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)?

20.7%;	34	I was unaware of this
22.6%;	37	I am partially aware, but lack details
56.7%;	93	I am aware and understand some implications

Replies 164; Forms 171

12. Would you like to receive more information about NAICS?

(26) Yes, please send me - (Mark all that apply)

84.2%;	85	A brochure that explains NAICS	32.7%;	33	Conference announcements
72.3%;	73	NAICS implementation plans	5.9%;	6	Other

Replies 101; Forms 171

-
- Disk that has SIC/NAICS Conversions
 - The reference book of classifications
 - Info on how to reconcile two systems.
 - Contacted by local information office fo Bureau.
 - A manual and numerical list
-

(27) No Thanks -

65.1%;	41	I will check the Census Bureau's web site (www.census.gov/naics)
34.9%;	22	I don't need more information about NAICS

Replies 63; Forms 171

V. USER PROFILE

Please tell us about yourself so we may serve you better.

(28) 13. Type of organization.

32.1%;	54	Government	1.2%;	2	Individual
32.1%;	54	Business	1.2%;	2	Library
19.0%;	32	Academic/Research	1.2%;	2	Chamber of Commerce
4.8%;	8	Association	4.2%;	7	Other
4.2%;	7	Media			

Replies 168; Forms 171

- Economics Consulting
- Economic Development District State Data Center depository.
- Economic Development
- Consultant
- Library (University
- Regional Planning Commission
- Council of Governments

(29) 14. Do you work in your organization's library?

38.0%;	62	Yes	62.0%;	101	No
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Replies 163; Forms 171

(30) 15. What is your affiliation with the Census Bureau?

50.0%;	83	None	2.4%;	4	State Data Center Affiliate
19.9%;	33	State Data Center	1.2%;	2	Affiliate Data Center
7.2%;	12	Business/Industry Data Center	13.9%;	23	Other
5.4%;	9	Census Information Center			

Replies 166; Forms 171

- SDC Affiliate
- State Data Center affiliates
- Richmond Public Library, BST Dept. 101 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219
- Affiliate
- Under the MI State Data Center
- Associate State Data Center
- Data Center Affiliate
- Census Liaison
- Customer
- Affiliate Agency
- Depository
- BIDC affiliate
- Fund the CIR-MA35N

- Regional planning agency.
- Economic Development District State Data Center depository
- Congress
- Former State Data Center
- Heavy user
- GPO Depository
- Local Census Affiliate
- Associate Data Center
- Federal Depository Library
- Local affiliate of State Data Center

(35) 20. May we contact you to follow up on this questionnaire?

84.7%; 138 Yes

15.3%; 25 No

Replies 163; Forms 171

(36) Question 21. Remarks:

- Do not sell/rent my phone # to telemarketers.
- Cost is often a factor with the use of Census information. Ideally, the Census Bureau could position itself similarly to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. BTS does an excellent job of disseminating transportation-related information. It would help researchers throughout the country if Census could apply the BTS template to its socioeconomic data.
- I've been trying to get Census data since 1991. I've used NTDB CD-ROM, StatUSA CD and now the Internet site. As soon as I learn the system really well-you change it. After I loaded the StatUSA CD--The NTDB CD would not work. We need older figures going back to the 1980's. It's impossible to run NTDP, then StatUSA on the same PC. I really hate the StatUSA CD.
- I use the data to find customers for vacant commercial-industrial properties I have listed, or to find properties for prospective customers-investors.
- 1). I cannot say that this is pressing, but I would like to see the results of the state-level retail trade series. 2). I need data files that are easily read into software such as SAS and SPSS. I also tend, when I am looking for something, to require as much history as I can get, because that is what is demanded of me. It would help me a great deal if all federal agencies that release data (especially Census, BEA, and BLS) would release an actual data file (e.g. GDP.DAT rather than GDP. BEA) at the same time as the press release, much as The Federal Reserve does with its industrial production notices. More history data on CD-ROM products, such as USA Counties would sometimes be useful as well (say 1940 or 1950 if available).
- A published paper version should always be made available for purchase to the public. Information being available on the internet is nice, yet it is a completely different animal than having a hard copy version of the information. An example: I can receive my news off the internet, but I still prefer to get my newspaper in the morning for reading at my leisure away from a computer.
- Census bureau data is always helpful--the data you provide enhances our publication and enables readers to make informal business decisions.
- Documents need to more clearly state whom to contact for follow-up information.
- Thanks for asking!
- The efforts to provide electronic format data are a vast improvement over paper/hard copy publications. They have increased the accuracy and utility of the data sets.
- The level of detail varies depending on the type of data requested. Mostly county-level data is used because this is what is available.

Although the technology of the internet is available to tie up my phone line browsing for information to print out is very time consuming, whereas a printed report is much easier to access & reference. Not all government entities have the capacity to keep pace with new, faster, computer hardware & software.

- --Strongly support new PACE (Pollution Abatement and Control Expenditures) studies

- --New BEA projections are needed (GSP, MSA-level,etc.
- I prefer e-mail contacts rather than phone, as I am frequently not available at my phone for extended periods.
- Please contact ASAP: Bob Davidson, Gov't Information Service Section Palm Beach county Library System Service

3650 SUMMIT BLVD. 33406
 (561) 233-2600, ext. 164
 email Robert ID@PB.SEFLIN.ORG

- Data validity in the NAICS project is one of our concerns. Has any provision been for cross checks of the data?
- I am disappointed that the Census Bureau has cut back on selected metropolitan data services, namely retail sales estimates and commercial building permit activity. While I understood Budget pressures, it seems that lower cost alternative could have been implimented rather than elimination (perhaps annual figures rather than monthly). It is important that the Federal govt. provides timely information that can capture the dynamics of regional growth as well as natural growth on proud level of data services.
- I received the survey on August 7th-so was not able to return it in the time requested!

Our office is very interested in any information on the implementation of NAICS-as our researchers will be using it a great deal.

- We still prefer to have reports generated as a hard copy for our library. If this is no longer possible, an e-mail notification service for new publications available on the Internet would be helpful.
- PDF files are big and we have to retype the data for analysis. Having raw or spreadsheet/database data would save us much time. BLS's web site is a good one to study.
- I think that this user survey is an excellent idea; you should poll users periodically.

I would be happy to participate in a users' panel or advisory group.

- We analyze the local situation, and compare it with national and regional trends. National and regional data have little value if there is no NYC equivalent (i.e. monthly retail trade).

NY area PMSA's are a joke. Stop surpressing to CMSA due to secondary suppression. Surpress the 2nd largest PMSA instead. The CMSA is the metro area.

- We look forward to working with you on the upcoming Census.
- Tutorials and/or manuals should be sent out with Census products. I have fiddled enough with Landview III to utilize some of its versatility. Other colleagues won't due to lack of time to waste on self-teaching (fumbling).

Landview III should allow searches down to the Block level & just empty the fields which raise concerns regarding privacy at that level.

- Thank you for asking. We use economic files on limited basis.
- Would be helpful if classes were offered in best techniques when seeking govt. data on the Web.

Location on Web tha would state what media given U.S. Govt. was available in (papers, Internet, etc.)

- Census is always quick and dependable. Great job!
- We are in the site selection/economic development function. Census data is absolutely crucial to our function, especially the ability to compare areas.
- We love the Census Bureau! Clear publications indices and ease of search engines on the Internet site are very important to us. Also, choice of how to download data is good, not all users need or can use spreadsheet software.
- Keep up the good work. I appreciate this survey.
- More documentation and instructions for obtaining data from gohper directories would be helpful.
- Keep up the good work.
- I use your "Telephone contacts for Data Users" and phone for help and information--of ten. I am very pleased with the response and helpfulness of all the people at Census, from receptionists to anyalysts. It would be nice to get it regularly. I forget, from year to year, to send for updates, until I

- notice that some contact names are out of date.
- I'd like to receive a list of publications at a State Data Center is entitled to receive on the regular basis. I'd also like to get the description for the data we receive.
- I like the fact that the Census Bureau Produces many of its documents in the .pdf format, these are easy to print, bind and archive in our library. However, what is even more important to our firm is the ability to manipulate the data, and easily bring it into a data base or spreadsheet. If I had to choose I would prefer the raw data to the printable format.

I might use more of the data listed in question now that I know it exists.

Figure 1: